

Helping Families Stay Healthy

Resources for Your Community

Introduction

Basic needs – food, clothing, shelter, and adequate health care – things we all need to stay healthy, yet these are things many people lack at certain times in their lives for various reasons. Your agency is in a unique situation in that you have a relationship with many families in your community. You know them; you care for their children. And, in many cases, you know when they need help. How can you help? The following provides a list of federal, state, and local programs that are available to those that may be struggling in your community. You can help by getting the word out so those who need these programs are aware of them. To determine if a family is eligible for any of these programs, they can either contact their local county/tribal, social or human services agency OR visit ACCESS on-line at: access.wi.gov. For a detailed listing of all local offices, visit: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/imagencies/index.htm>.

Programs That Can Help

FoodShare – is a federal program run by the State of Wisconsin. It is for families and single people with little or no income. FoodShare benefits are received monthly and are used to buy food at stores using a debit card called the Wisconsin QUEST Card. FoodShare benefits can be used to buy foods such as: Breads and cereals, Fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, dairy products, and seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat. Encouraging families to participate in FoodShare will benefit your child care center. If a family that you care for receives FoodShare benefits the children enrolled in your day care will be categorically eligible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Participation in FoodShare also helps take the burden off from emergency food resources, such as food banks and food pantries and puts money back into the local economy.

National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs – are Federal nutrition programs for children attending school. All children may participate in these programs when attending school; however children coming from lower-income families may qualify to receive the meals for free or at a reduced price. Families need to apply for the benefits through the school their child attends. Applications may be completed throughout the school year. As with the Child and Adult Care Food Program, if a family qualifies for FoodShare, children attending school are then categorically eligible for free breakfast and lunch through these programs.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) – is a Federal nutrition program that is designed to promote and maintain the health and well-being of nutritionally at-risk pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition and breastfeeding information, and referral to other health and nutrition services. WIC promotes and supports breastfeeding. To be eligible for WIC benefits in Wisconsin, a person must: be a pregnant, breastfeeding or new mother; be an infant up to age one; or be a child up to age 5; **and** be a resident of Wisconsin; **and** be income eligible; **and** have a health or nutrition need. Families should contact their local WIC project office to apply. To find the nearest location, visit: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/localproject/localprojects.htm>.

BadgerCare Plus – is a program for children under 19 years of age and families in Wisconsin who need and want health insurance. It is for all children, regardless of income. It also offers access to comprehensive, affordable health care to many families and pregnant women in Wisconsin. BadgerCare Plus is designed for people who do not currently have access to health insurance. It is not designed to replace private insurance. For that reason, there are specific rules that do not allow most people to drop their private insurance to participate in BadgerCare Plus. For information about the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Childless Adults, go to badgercareplus.org/core. To enroll in BadgerCare, families can contact any of the community organizations listed on: <http://www.badgercareplus.org/gethelp.htm>. They can also apply on-line through the ACCESS website.

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) – provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. Operating with federal and state funding, the program provides assistance to approximately 160,000 Wisconsin households annually. Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. Whether it is wood, propane, natural gas, electricity, or fuel oil to heat the home, energy assistance is available for those that qualify. For more information on the WHEAP and how to apply, please call 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947), or visit the "Where to Apply" tab on www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov to find the local energy assistance agency.

All About ACCESS – www.access.gov

ACCESS is a fast, easy-to-use internet tool that can help you or someone you know:

- Find out which low or no-cost health, nutrition and other programs they might be able to enroll.
- Apply online for FoodShare, Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus (including Family Planning Services).
- Get up-to-date information about the status of their FoodShare, Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus (including Family Planning Services), SeniorCare or Caretaker Supplement benefits.
- Report changes online to your local county or tribal agency.

There are many ways your agency can use ACCESS to help people in need. You can:

- Make a computer available in your office so that families can use ACCESS on a walk-in or by appointment basis.
- Provide families with the internet address to ACCESS or add a link to ACCESS on your agency's web site.
- Help spread the word about ACCESS by telling families, colleagues, friends and others.

Contact your local office to learn more!

Other Ways to Help:

- ✓ Include information about these programs in your agency's enrollment packet, newsletter, on the backs of menus, etc. Provide as detailed information pertinent to your community as possible. Emphasize that participating in these programs are CONFIDENTIAL. Federal and State programs not only provide a personal benefit to those that participate; the programs also put money back into your community.
- ✓ Provide families with food and clothing pantry locations and hours in your community.
- ✓ Conduct a food and clothing drive for the pantries in your community or a local food bank. Contact the pantries/food bank first to determine what items they need and how they would like you to conduct the drive.
- ✓ Consider providing a food and/or clothing 'closet' for the families you serve. Some schools have started their own food pantries for children to take home non-perishable items on the weekend. Second Harvest has a similar Backpack Program it has implemented in a few schools in Southern WI. For more information, visit: www.secondharvestmadison.org. These ideas could be implemented in the day care setting.



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Food Banks in Wisconsin

America's Second Harvest
1700 W Fond du Lac Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53205
Phone: (414)931-7400
www.secondharvestwi.org

Feed My People Food Bank
331 Putnam Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703-3573
Phone: (715) 835-9415
www.fmpfoodbank.org

Hunger Task Force, Inc.
201 S. Hawley Court
Milwaukee, WI 53214
Phone: (414) 777-0483
www.hungertaskforce.org

Channel One, Inc
131 35th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904
Phone: (507) 287-2350
www.helpingfeedpeople.org

Second Harvest Heartland
Main Office (Saint Paul):
1140 Gervais Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55109-2020
Phone (651) 484-5117
1-888-339-3663 (Toll Free)
www.2harvest.org

Second Harvest Northern Lakes
Food Bank
4503 Airpark Boulevard
Duluth, MN 55811
Phone: (218) 727-5653
www.northernlakesfoodbank.org

Second Harvest Foodbank of
Southern Wisconsin
2802 Dairy Drive
Madison, WI 53718
Phone: (608) 223-9121
www.secondharvestmadison.org